Pakistan's efforts to push terrorists into J&K

581. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has stepped up its efforts to push terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the army has foiled four major infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control in the first six days of November in which 11 militants, mostly Pakistani nationals have been killed; and

(c) if so, in the light of these, whether the decision to reduce ground armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir is justified?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There has been an overall decrease in the infiltration attempts from across the border compared to last year. However, in the month of November, 2004 there was slight increase in the infiltration attempts compared to the months of September and October, 2004.

(b) During the first six days of November, 2004 four infitration attempts were failed by army in which 12 militants were killed.

(c) After due deliberation on the security situation, the number of Army personnel in the State of Jammu and Kashmir are being reduced with effect from 17th November, 2004.

Shortage of higher ranking officers in the Army

†582. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently there has been a shortage of higher ranking officers in the Indian Army and youths are not interested to join the army;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering any measures for raising the present facilities like pay and allowances etc. to motivate the youths; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):

(a) There is no shortage of higher ranking officers in the Indian Army.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) The youth are joining the Indian Army through the National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla, Indian Military Academy, Dehradun and Officer Training Academy, Chennai, where all vacancies are being filled. However, in the engineering streams there are some vacancies, mainly because, as Indian economy develops, other options are available to the youth. Sustained efforts, like launching of periodical Image Projection Campaigns and organising seminars and lectures in schools and colleges, are being made to attract the youth to join the Army. No proposal for raising the pay and allowances is under consideration.

Non-recovery of killer landmines

583. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that some killer landmines planted by the Indian army in the Kassowal Enclave, along the Indo-Pak border, two years ago are nowhere to be traced;

(b) whether it is a fact that army sappers have met no success in recovering the M-16 'jumping jack' mines from some minefields, despite countless rounds of manual and mechanical demining; and

(c) if so, the action Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Out of the minefields laid in Kassowal Eenclave during Op Parakram, one minefield of approximately 14 acres is yet to be completely demined.

(b) In this minefield some anti personnel mines have not been located so far as they have either been destroyed or are missing due to environmental factors like rains or floods as also tampering by rodents.

(c) The process of recovery of the missing mines is currently underway. If the missing mines remain unaccounted for, then approximately three acres of the Kassowal Enclave may have to be fenced off to avoid any casualties.